



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Highlights

April 2019: The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is presently located in twenty-two different locations in the four primary Connecticut River watershed states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Visitor Services

Elementary School Family Science



Visitor Services Staff from Conte Refuge participated in a Family Science Night sponsored by the Amherst, Massachusetts school district. More than 100 students from Kindergarten through 6th grade learned about animal adaptations from the pelts and skulls on display and the “blubber glove” activity, set up at Conte’s table. Other science demonstrations at the event included making slime, pollinator education, and geology. This is the first year the school district held the event, and we plan to participate again next year.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Celebrating Earth Day in Springfield



The Conte Refuge helped celebrate Earth Day at the Springfield Science Museums this April. Along with 20 other conservation and earth friendly organizations, we participated in the museum’s annual event. In addition to learning about the Conte Refuge and the diversity of work we do in the watershed, visitors learned about pollinators, solar, recycling, the benefits of planting trees and other earth friendly ways to live.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Getting Wild in Forest Park



Photo Credit: USFWS

Visitor Service staff at Conte sponsored a Wild Animal Egg Hunt in Forest Park, Springfield Massachusetts. More than 140 visitors participated in the environmental educational hunt. Visitors searched for plastic eggs “hidden” along the trail that contained pictures of different animals found at the Conte Refuge. In addition, visitors read an original story posted along the trail titled, *A Hike with Charlie*, about a young boy apprehensive of going on a hike with his mother into the forest, yet ends up having a wonderful adventure. Conte Staff worked in partnership with the City of Springfield Parks Buildings and Recreational Department and ReGreen Springfield, a non-profit organization that brings quality environmental education to urban communities. It was a great day filled with fun for everyone.

For more information contact: Tasha_Daniels@fws.gov

Cops and Bobbers Hooks and Ladders



Photo Credit: USFWS

In our third year partnering with the Springfield Elks, Police and Fire Departments and Mass Wildlife, the Cops & Bobbers, Hooks & Ladders Youth Fishing Event attracted more than 200 participants. This year we received generous grants from Cabela's Outdoor Foundation and Balise Auto Group, which helped fund t-shirts for all participants and a new fishing rod for kids to take home who did not have one of their own. Some of the fish for the event were provided by the Service's Berkshire National Fish Hatchery.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

April vacation brings record attendance to the Springfield Museums



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Refuge exhibited its Watershed on Wheels exhibits during April vacation week at the Springfield Science Museums. Nearly 6,500 hundred people visited the museum during the 5 days, making this a record year for the museum. In addition, we assisted museum staff with interpretation programs for the watershed table, demonstrating how rivers are formed and how water impacts land.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@FWS.gov



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Hadley Girl Scout Troop Earns Outdoor Badge at Fort River Birding and Nature Trail



Conte Visitor Services Staff helped a third grade Girl Scout Troop from Hadley earn their Outdoor and Nature Badge at the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail. The girls helped plant native plants in the pollinator garden, learned why pollinators are important to the health of our ecosystem, completed a nature scavenger hunt around the trail and actively explored the pond. It was a true outdoor experience, as the girls completed much of this work in the rain.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Amanda Kinchla

Barn Swallows



Conte Refuge staff installed two trial nest structures in a barn at the Hartsbrook School in Hadley, Massachusetts. These structures are part of a pilot study being conducted in collaboration with Massachusetts Audubon, intended to support outreach efforts on aerial insectivore nesting preferences and to better connect people with nature.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Nano-tag Antennas for Migratory Bird Research



Incidental to replacing the roof on the 17,600 square-foot arena and hot walker room at the Fort River Division, we needed to remove and construct a pole to support the nano-tag antenna used for migratory bird research. We modeled the pole after a typical flag pole set-up.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Volunteers plant native wetland plants at the Fort River Birding and Nature



Refuge volunteers and our ACE intern joined forces to plant native wetland plants in the new vernal pool located at the beginning of the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail. The vernal pool has become very popular with the reptile and amphibian populations at the refuge.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

The Search for Wood Turtles



This April Conte Refuge hosted a portion of a wood turtle training and field survey effort at the Fort River Division in Hadley, Massachusetts. Unfortunately no turtles were located. But efforts continue to study this important reptile.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Refuge Quarters Converted to Dorms



It's official! The quarters located on the Fort River Division is now classified as a bunkhouse. It was a bit of a struggle! However, we managed to fit two sinks, two showers and two toilets in the same room. It can also double as a game room!

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Nulhegan Basin Division, Vermont

Kingdom Heritage Trail



Photo Credit: USFWS

Partners of the Conte Refuge (VT Forest, Parks and Recreation, VT Fish and Wildlife, Nature Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Green Mountain Club, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Northwoods Stewardship, Vermont Huts and Weyerhaeuser) met at the Nulhegan Basin Division office to discuss the Kingdom Heritage Trail system. The 21 mile trail network crosses a mosaic of conserved lands in NE Vermont and terminates at the Nulhegan Basin Division of the Conte Refuge.

For more information contact Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Feral Swine Meeting



Photo Credit: USDA / APHIS

A feral swine task force meeting was held at the Nulhegan Basin Division office on April 25th. The annual meeting consisted of U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife and Veterinary Services staff, Vermont Fish and Wildlife staff, New Hampshire Fish and Game staff, Canadian Wildlife Services staff and refuge staff from the Conte and Missisquoi Refuges. The meeting focused on eradicating feral swine from NH and efforts to keep VT free of feral swine. With more than a dozen feral swine farms in Quebec and a large farm in New Hampshire, there is a growing concern that feral swine could become a problem in both states.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

USFWS Managers meet with Vermont congressional staff

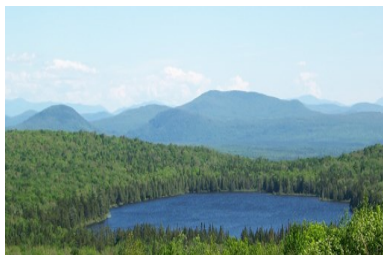


Photo Credit: USFWS

USFWS managers stationed in Vermont met at the Missisquoi National Wildlife refuge for an annual Vermont congressional staff meeting. The meeting primarily focused on providing project updates from throughout the state. In the afternoon the group toured Missisquoi NWR by boat.

For more information contact Steve_Agius@fws.gov